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Operation Absolute Resolve: Reasserting Dominance through Resource Realism

On January 3, 2026, the United States military executed Operation Absolute Resolve, a high-precision special operation in Caracas that resulted in the capture and extraction of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. While the official justification for the raid centered on unsealed indictments for narco-terrorism and cocaine trafficking, the intervention represents a fundamental shift in the global order driven by a calculated "margin call" on America's economic standing. By late 2025, the United States faced systemic fragility characterized by record-low levels in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and a looming threat to the petrodollar system, as rumors circulated that Venezuela planned to price its vast oil reserves in a basket of non-dollar currencies.

Tactically, the operation was defined by total technological dominance, utilizing over 150 aircraft from multiple military branches to suppress

advanced air defenses and paralyze a 93,000-strong ground force in under three hours. The use of the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team alongside Delta Force allowed the executive branch to frame the mission as a law enforcement action, thereby bypassing traditional requirements for congressional war powers authorization. The administration characterized this assertive move as a 21st-century application of the Monroe Doctrine, styled as the "Donroe Doctrine," declaring that American hegemony in the Western Hemisphere would never again be questioned.

The strategic objective extends beyond political change to the wholesale restructuring of Venezuela's energy infrastructure, which holds approximately 303 billion barrels of proven oil reserves—the largest on earth. This "near-shoring" of energy security is intended to provide a steady flow of discounted heavy sour crude to Gulf Coast refineries, which were specifically engineered for such feedstock and currently face a critical supply deficit. However, analysts caution that the industry is currently in a state of decay due to decades of mismanagement, and returning production to its

historic peaks will require a "Marshall Plan" for oil involving over $100 billion in investment and a decade of sustained effort.

The intervention has sparked a polarized international response, with Western allies offering cautious support for the removal of an authoritarian leader while the "Eurasian Bloc"—led by Russia and China—condemned the raid as an act of armed aggression and a breach of the UN Charter. Domestically, the operation has intensified debates over executive overreach, with critics labeling the action as "resource imperialism" and "gunboat diplomacy" that sets a dangerous precedent for the "criminalization of sovereignty". Ultimately, Operation Absolute Resolve signals the dawn of an era defined by Resource Realism, where the United States is increasingly willing to utilize kinetic force to secure the physical collateral necessary to maintain its global financial and energy dominance.